

From: srd@wt6.usdoj.gov@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/14/01 7:02pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Honorable Sirs and Madams:

Microsoft's proposal to distribute their software to needy schools to atone for their monopolistic behaviour is ludicrous. Addicting yet another generation to their software exacerbates rather than mitigates the problem. While young and flexible, students should learn that alternative computing environments, such as Linux, BSD, UNIX, MacOSX and BeOS exist and have considerable virtues. In particular, students should be exposed to the open source movement, because of its low cost, intellectual freedom, and technical excellence. Education in the comparative merits of these systems is vastly preferable to indoctrination in the Microsoft way... Microsoft's proposed remedy is blatantly self-serving and an insult to intelligence.

A sensible way to reduce Microsoft's stranglehold on the software market is to **compel** them to open their proprietary Office file formats to the software world. I believe the sole reason Microsoft's OSES are so widely utilized is the public's addiction to their proprietary Office applications. Only by opening/documenting Microsoft's proprietary Office file formats, can competing office products, such as Sun's StarOffice, gain a competitive foothold. Without the capability to convert documents to and from Microsoft Office format, alternative office application software will **never** break through Microsoft's entrenched user base. Microsoft's strategy of usurping and perverting open standards in their exclusive interest is well documented (<http://www.opensource.org/halloween/>) and must be curtailed. It is time to reverse this parasitic process, and make their proprietary "standards" open to the public. All "standards" should be public.

While compelling Microsoft to make its Office software available for Linux or MacOSX would benefit those OSES in the short-term, it would increase Microsoft's dominance in the Office applications arena in the long run. I believe that opening/documenting the Office file formats would be a far more effective means of stimulating software innovation and development.

While the courts have found Microsoft to be a monopoly, the DoJ's recent actions suggest that there will be no meaningful penalty. By putting Microsoft above the law, Microsoft's predatory behavior will become more egregious. Although Microsoft's malicious actions toward Netscape and Sun were serious, they pale in comparison to their apparently little-known, yet long-standing licensing practice that forbids or penalizes computer resellers from setting up dual-boot systems capable of running other operating systems. Microsoft must be compelled to cease and desist in this particular anti-competitive practice!

Microsoft has recently waged a libelous war against the the open source software movement. Their officials have called the movement "un-American", "communist", and "a cancer". There can be no doubt that Microsoft will stop at nothing to eradicate the open source movement. The DoJ's ultimate goal **should** be to insure that this kind of predatory Microsoft behaviour is banished from the face of the earth. Any settlement wording that requires Microsoft to share its APIs and file formats with other software businesses **MUST BE WORDED TO EXPLICITLY INCLUDE THE MEMBERS OF THE FREE SOFTWARE MOVEMENT!**

Anyone who doubts the value of a diverse "gene pool" in the software field should pay closer attention to the litany of virii that plague Microsoft, but not other, OSes. A huge amount of time, money and productivity have been wasted as a result of Microsoft's inability or lack of motivation to secure its OSes. Further, the never-ending cycle of pointless "upgrades" that Microsoft has used to sustain it's revenue stream should offend rational people everywhere.

Respectfully,

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